

ST. THOMAS BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

Appropriate & Ethical Use of AI Tools in Competition Submissions

The Schulze School of Entrepreneurship supports the responsible use of AI tools, including large language models (LLMs), as part of modern entrepreneurial practice. These tools may be used to support research, analysis, and communication when they meaningfully enhance the development of your venture idea.

As such, the Business Plan Competition permits the use of AI tools as a support mechanism **in the submission process**, but not as a substitute for original entrepreneurial thinking, judgment, and work.

What's Allowed

Teams may use AI tools to support the development of their business plan, including:

- Brainstorming and refining ideas or value propositions
- Improving clarity, structure, grammar, or tone
- Summarizing research or exploring alternative scenarios
- Stress-testing assumptions or outlining approaches
- Editing or polishing team-generated drafts

When used well, AI can improve insight, rigor, and communication.

What's Not Allowed

The following uses are not appropriate for this competition:

- Submitting a business plan that is largely or entirely AI-generated
- Using AI to create fabricated data, customer insights, or financials
- Relying on AI to generate a full plan or major sections with minimal team input
- Submitting content that the team cannot clearly explain or defend

Plans that appear generic, superficial, or internally inconsistent may indicate over-reliance on AI and will score poorly.

Evaluation & Consequences

Judges evaluate submissions holistically and will consider whether AI use enhanced or detracted from the quality of the plan.

- Effective AI use that enhances clarity and insight may strengthen a submission.
- Over-reliance on AI that detracts from depth, realism, or originality will result in point deductions under Content and Written Mechanics.
- In extreme cases, submissions may be disqualified.

Live Pitch & Q&A Reminder

Finalists will present their business pitch live and participate in unscripted Q&A. Judges will probe assumptions, financials, and strategy. If you cannot confidently explain and defend your plan without AI assistance, it will be evident.